

LAWSUIT

DWP LAND PURCHASE: AN APPELLATE COURT RULING COULD HAVE LONG-TERM POLICY EFFECT

The quiet purchase of 160 acres of valley land by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power has erupted into a hard-fought court battle, outcome of which could have significant bearing on future DWP land policies in Inyo County.

The land purchase, involving the Audrey Knapp estate near Sawmill Creek, stands in contradiction to DWP's claim that it wants to rid itself of city-owned land in the Owens Valley.

The purchase, in which DWP laid out more than \$20,000 over the bid of two Bishop men, may have been in violation not only of DWP's own charter, but also of one or more sta-

tutes. The department is named as defendant in a lawsuit filed for Bob Thayer and Ron Stone of Bishop. It is their claim that they bid \$86,000 for the property and that their bid was accepted by the court. The transaction took place in July of 1976.

Thayer and Stone claim that when they went into court to pay for the land, "the DWP was there with \$110,000." The land they thought they purchased spreads over a stretch of hill country between Independence and Big Pine.

Their attorney, firebrand DWP adversary Leland Bray, took the case to court. He claims that as a public agency DWP should have filed an environmental impact report "because of their long-term activity in the county, the amount of land they own, and the effect DWP has already had on the Inyo environment. The purchase of 160 acres may have an impact."

When Bray met head-on with DWP attorney Ed (See LAND PURCHASE, Page 6)

WATER CONSERVATION

UNDERLYING A REBELLIOUS SURFACE, THERE EXISTS FOR NOW AT LEAST A DEMONSTRATED WISH TO COOPERATE

Whatever may be their sometimes rebellious attitudes toward the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, County residents have demonstrated an unexpected willingness to comply with DWP's water conservation program.

DWP figures released this past week show that Inyo County water users voluntarily turned off their taps to drop water-use figures by a startling 25-30% - as compared to forced cutbacks among Los Angeles users that amounted to only 20-25%.

And for its part, DWP showed an equal amount of co-operation by its leniency in dealing with "allowable usage" situations in those situations wherein larger amounts of water are needed for business operation. Readjusted figures for "allowance" provided solutions for at least 70 instances - out of about 80 - in which there had been appeals for larger water allowances.

A county plan to set up an appeals comm- (See CONSERVATION, Page 6)

GRAND JURY

QUIETLY AT WORK IN SPECIAL SESSION, JURORS MAY SOON ISSUE A STATEMENT

After a special session this week, the Inyo grand jury "may" release a statement on its current activities. Reminding inquirers that jury proceedings are secret, the jury foreman allowed only that jurors are involved in a "continuing investigation."

He disclosed that the jury is also watching closely the veterans service officer issue. "We want to make sure the board (of sup-

ervisors) gets a new man, and will keep the office like it is," said Jury Foreman Ray Williamson of Bishop.

Williamson did elaborate on jury statements to the press: In-

formation released for publication goes first through a jury press committee (headed this year by Chalfant Press' Paul Payne), and then okayed, or edited, by Superior Judge Verne Summers. Whether or not the jury discloses its current activities, it will issue a mid-term report early in the new year, according to Jury Foreman Williamson. (See GRAND JURY, Page 6)

RELIGION'S DEVOUT LONERS

A PASTOR SAYS RELIGIOUS INTEREST IS ON THE INCREASE, BUT HE AND OTHERS ARE "FRUSTRATED" BY "HERMIT CHRISTIANS"

The passage of three decades has brought a renewed interest in religion of the very personal, devotional - almost mystical - kind, but for the churches the "charismatic" movement has meant a move away from structured or organized worship.

Calling them "Hermit Christians," the Rev. Steven Kobernick of the Bishop Ministerial Association says he and other area pastors feel "they would grow more if they would meet together with others in their religious practices."

The "turning inward" demanded by many of the world's religions became for many an alienation in the post-World War II years, and externalized expressions of religious thought and feeling, shared before in the congregational environment, gave way - as many believed sincerely - to the "closet" as directed by Jesus in the New Testament.

Kobernick noted the religious interest - even intensity - of many in Inyo County; but the problem lies not in any lack of interest, but in the way the religious expression is applied. "A lot of people come here," he said, "to get away from structure and formal organization...Those are what I call 'Hermit Christians'...They read the Bible and pray, but not with an organized congregation." Kobernick says many other ministers in the Owens Valley voice the same complaint.

How has the "charismatic" and Pentacostal movement fared in Inyo County?

Kobernick says he has "seen some of that around here," but adds that it is "unusual."

Although there appears to be no partic- (See HERMIT CHRISTIANS, Page 3)

»»»» NOTES FROM B.K. «««

VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS are asserting their clout. They've already shown that they can carry weight, in pushing for the removal of former veterans service officer Jim Kelley. In a letter to the board of supervisors they clearly let it be known they want a say in selecting his replacement. The board agrees: Vets' representatives from all communities in the county will be named to a screening committee.



BENNETT KESSLER

QUOTE OF THE WEEK: That of President Carter in a tree-planting ceremony at the White House last week. As he set a Georgia tree into the District of Columbia soil, he ruefully noted the lack of enthusiasm for his energy bill among the lawmakers. "I hope," he said, "that some future president won't have to burn it to keep warm."

NO REAL HEAT PROBLEM IN THE WHITE HOUSE, though. That energy bill, and some other costly programs appear to be getting plenty of hot water for the president. Polls show a decline in his popularity.

SPEAKING OF CARTER, there is a secretary at the courthouse whose family is well-acquainted with the Carters. She keeps quiet about it, but already a couple of calls from her direct to the White House have helped to move along some matters dealing with the water issue. The county administration hasn't yet noticed - or used - her influence there, since she works quietly. And would you believe? She votes Republican! She's a born conservative, but when she wants something done she calls "Dad" and "Dad" calls Mrs. Carter. At least one bureaucrat has jumped quick in response to one of her calls (via Mrs. Carter).

HARRIED FISH & GAME MEN, trying to keep everybody happy in the Elk Issue, have their own private thoughts about the problem. Since they can't shoot the Elk, and since they will have to go through the "moving" hassle every year (Elk cows breed at about 90% a year), a Fish & Game man suggests with tongue-in-cheek: "What somebody ought to do is slip into the herds without anybody knowing about it, and perform a few vasectomies. That'd take care of the problem for a couple of years, maybe more."

A FEW DWP HIGHER-UPS are privately upset with their boss, General Manager Lou Winnard. They feel he didn't "come up through the ranks" and they're talking quietly about possible embarrassment to DWP caused by his most recent salary increase - from about \$73,000 to more than \$77,000. - and he and some other officials are still fighting for even more. The mayor himself, Tom Bradley, only gets about \$56,000.

A news service source in Los Angeles says he "doesn't wonder" that DWP men make high salaries - plus fat expense accounts. "DWP has its own hidden government," he said. "They look after their own, so long as every-

body stays in line." He also disclosed that an assistant city attorney who works for the DWP earns more (\$60,000) than his boss, the city attorney, Burt Pines, who draws a mere \$48,000. Even in retirement, the old DWP locals are well-looked-after. Bob Phillips retired with a \$40,000 annuity, and he's probably picking up more because of his work with DWP's private public relations outfit, Water and Power Associates.

Los Angeles people are beginning to get the message, though. They're mad because in the long run they - and we - have to foot the bill.

AND INYO OFFICIALS ARE STILL ASLEEP on their public information proposal. They had an opportunity to land a blow on their DWP adversaries' heads last week: It seems that DWP apparently forgot - or deliberately neglected - to include the Owens Valley in its new rate increase package. City Councilman Bob Wilkerson, infuriated by the oversight, barely brought himself to vote his approval of the increase. Some citizens in LA sympathetic to Owens Valley say the time is right - now - for the valley to cash in on potential publicity.

Why would DWP "deliberately neglect" to include the valley in its increase proposal? Sources in the Southland say DWP may be letting things cool down here to improve the "political climate," and they want no more trouble or public disapproval in the valley.

IRATE KETCHUM SUPPORTERS calling in about our reference to the congressman's link with "Big Oil." They claim the congressman is not associated with "Big Oil," but only "oil." Ketchum's friends say "Big Oil" is Exxon, Texaco, Shell, etc., and that the congressman's several petroleum industry campaign donors (at Houston and elsewhere) are merely "oil" people, not "Big Oil."

SINCE WHEN is association with "oil" people something to get defensive about? As for me, I LIKE oil people! ...And what work-gal doesn't ?!

A TIP TO INVESTORS: If you're looking for a good solid stock buy (non-speculative) that will pay a nice check every three months, ask your broker about Hobart Industries.

SCI-FI BUFFS are turning out to see "Star Wars" at Bishop. And opening now in LA is the new one, "Encounter of the Third Kind," an extravagant flick about flying saucers, but the critics say it's no real comparison to "Star Wars." Guess I'll have to head for Bishop: I'd hate to be the very only person in the world not to have seen R2-D2 do his thing...So...Happy space flights...and may the news in your day be good news...every day.

Sincerely,

BK

Moving the Tule Elk

WITH TWO ELK DEAD, THE MOVE TO CONCORD IS COMPLETE, BUT GAME OFFICIALS SEE THE PRESENT PROGRAM AS WASTED EFFORT

Finally, after some delays due to wind and weather, the Fish and Game Department has completed its roundup of 30 of the valley's Tule Elk and trucked them off to ranges east of San Francisco. Although no final figures are yet available, it would appear now that the removal of the animals cost Californians about a thousand dollars a head for the operation, not including a three-mile fence line at Concord Naval Station which added another \$55,000 to the tab.

Although the fish and game people charged with the job seem openly willing in their work, many privately see the elk move as a waste of time and money. Most of the elk they moved in the past week were pregnant cows and the F&G officers foresee the same overpopulation problem cropping up at Concord.

Even with the transport of the elk, the Owens Valley situation is still to be "finally" decided. The local herds had outgrown their legal numbers by 93 (by now, perhaps more), and just what F&G will do with the other 63 is still undecided.

"Politics and pressure," commented one frankly disgusted department worker. "All this waste of time, waste of money, and by next spring we'll have to do it all over again."

"Anything that can breed like Tule Elk is far from being an 'endangered species.'"

Meanwhile, even as the last animals were moved out of the valley Sunday, new problems had already begun at Concord. The report from there was to the effect that a holding pen set up there to be used until the fence line is completed, was inadequate for the job, and the elk had escaped. Another helicopter roundup seemed inevitable, unless officials could turn up with an alternative solution.

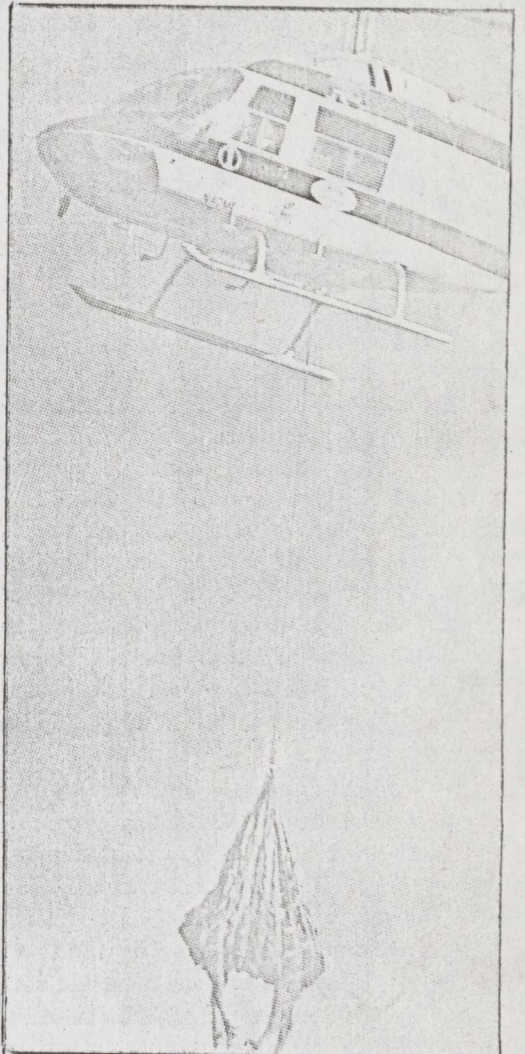
But the troubles of the fish and game department so far have prompted little sympathy from the conservation and naturalists' groups whose pressure on the state administration prevents game officers from shooting the elk - the original plan they thought to be the easiest, the most humane, and also least expensive. Under state law, each elk herd in the state must be held to certain maximum limits, a law that the extremely fertile elk cows have chosen to ignore.

Fish & Game Information Officer John MacKenzie said he sees no end to the problem under present laws and conditions. He said Concord "will load up with them immediately." He said he has no idea what his department will do with the remaining overpopulation of 63 in the valley. A decision on that is expected to cause an uproar from one or the other of the opposing groups, with the game department caught - as usual - up in their helicopters with guns loaded either with tranquilizer darts, or bullets, and trying to make some agonizing decisions.

HERMIT CHRISTIANS, Continued

ular organized effort among them, Kobernick says that he and other ministers (individually) encourage the meditating loners to join a congregation. "Their non-church attitude," he says, "is frustrating. I believe they would grow more if they would meet together with others in their religious practices."

On the other side are those - the "Hermit Christians," as Kobernick calls them - who long have expressed the feeling that social mores and even "middle-class dress" may have a lot to do with their alienation, especially if they are in the 20-30 age group. One of these whose beliefs and practices would fit into the "Hermit" definition chooses, predictably, to remain anonymous - a further confirmation of his



TULE ELK IN 'COPTER SLING
"..about \$1000 a head"

"alienation from the church." He expressed the problem, or at least his problem, with a question: "What if Saul had been in an average American protestant church when he had his experience of Christ, instead of on the road to Damascus?" And he offered this answer: "The congregation there would probably have been embarrassed and would have thought he was crazy; Saul...or Paul...would have become an instant social outcast, and nobody there would have believed his experience was valid."

Although the hermits claim that the True Religious Experience is their goal, most admit to the churches' positive social and ethical impact, and many admit further that their longed-for vision of the other-world has yet to materialize. The anonymous "Hermit" also admits that congregational togetherness often lends reinforcement when the individual might otherwise fall into doubt about where his yellow brick road is heading.

Whatever the gap between the congregational and the Hermit Christians of Kobernick's definition, the churches as organizations are not hurting. Nationally, church attendance is up by about two percent - a considerable increase when weighed in the light of the 1960's and early '70's declines.

According to a recent study conducted by ministerial alliance members in Inyo County, attendance remains constant, and shows there has been little variance in the past 10 years.

But so far, the effort to round up the elusive "hermits" has been a casting of the nets into empty waters.

COUNTY EMPLOYEES: LOOKING AT CRITICAL OPTIONS

DECISIONS THEIR LEADERS MAKE NOW MAY HAVE FAR-REACHING AFFECTS ON INYO COUNTY'S EMPLOYEES, THEIR POCKETBOOKS, AND THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION AND ITS POLICIES.

Apparently aware of the increasing work load and pressure on the president's office of the Inyo County Employees Association, no fewer than five nominees selected by a committee for election have said no thanks to the honor.

As many employees shy away from leadership roles because of the increasing demands on those positions, the ICEA board and President Scruggs are looking for a future course.

Among their options is the (somewhat reluctant) proposal to provide presidential incentive by paying the electee. Scruggs, who has served two years on the job, points out that it is no longer an essentially "honorary" position and that many hours are spent weekly in dealing with new labor, insurance and contract regulations - not to mention the annual money-haggling with a rigidly conservative administration.

County Administrator John K. Smith was once asked how "effective" the employees association is, and he quickly replied, "It usually depends on who they elect as officers." And Smith should know; it is his job, sometimes a tedious one, to deal each summer with employees seeking cost-of-living adjustments and "benefits" in an inflation-stunned time of sky-rocketing insurance premiums and wage-and-price indexes.

Since its beginnings some years back - at a time when it was largely a fraternal or social club - the employees association has evolved into a - into the - bargaining power of the county's workers. Given the choice of affiliating with a labor union, or dealing with their own officers, the employees have so far opted to keep wage bargaining in Inyo under their own control. Barring what they would see as gross unfairness on the part of the county, they probably prefer to keep it that way. By that very fact, however, the employees' officers feel now, more than ever, that membership unity and strong leadership are minimum requirements for growth, or even survival.

But as the employees back away from responsibility of leadership, the day of union organization and representation draws correspondingly closer - a prospect most county officials say they dread. During last year's wage negotiations, Administrator Smith indulged briefly a bit of nostalgic wishful-thinking; he reflected that he "preferred" the days long gone "when the officials and the employees didn't have to negotiate."

So far those negotiations have remained on relatively peaceful levels and on terms more-or-less acceptable to both sides. But some differences have carried the potential for serious conflict - such as last year's county decision to name almost a third of the employee membership to "management" positions which rendered them ineffective as employee bargainers.

Most everyone involved sees "days long gone" as being very gone indeed. Continuing inflation that eats away employees' income, increasingly complex regulations, wage indexes -

all these added to the trendy "public employees" desire to keep up with, or even surpass, their laboring brothers securely unionized in private industry - contrive to create an organizational juggernaut which, even in Inyo County, seems already to be rolling ponderously forward. Now it's a question of who will take it's driver's wheel and give it direction.

Scruggs' two years as president is by her considered "marginally effective." Under the association's present charter she cannot be re-elected president - even if she wanted to be. It is not outside the membership's power to change the charter, or to reorganize, however. Asked if she would consider a paid "management" position, she replied that she "might consider" it if the membership wanted

(See EMPLOYEES, Page 7)

CREDIT UNION POST-MORTEM

AN OFFICIAL OF THE DEFUNCT COUNTY CREDIT UNION EXAMINES WHAT HAPPENED TO IT AND HOLDS LITTLE HOPE OF STARTING A NEW ONE

No easy task will be the re-establishment of a credit union to replace the one enjoyed but only half-heartedly supported by the county's loan-inclined employees. This is the view of one of the founders of the now-defunct credit union who last week offered his post-mortem examination and his reasons for its demise.

Since it was organized in 1969, Ben Ashworth of Independence had served as the credit union's board president. "It might have been saved," he said, "if the employees had got up and done something for it." Apathy, then, except in time of need, is shown as a primary problem, according to Ashworth's estimate. A similar apathy may be read into some of the current problems of the county employees association (See story, this page).

Ashworth said he and his wife had donated most of the time and effort that went into organizing and operating the credit union. Efforts to generate a like interest in employees went largely ignored, but the employees nevertheless found the credit union an easy touch in time of need. The bad risks among them left several thousand dollars in un-repaid loans.

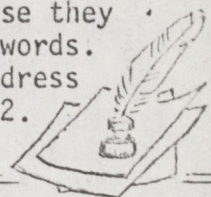
Ashworth said the credit union needed volunteers, but "nobody wanted to bother with collections, advertising and building up the credit union membership...and the ball was dropped right there.

"At this point," he continued, "it will be rough getting something else started."

To operate on a sound base, Ashworth estimates a credit union would need about \$200,000 as a bare minimum to work with, a figure very nearly impossible in Inyo County's thin economic atmosphere. Before its liquidation began some weeks back, the union had about half that much and, according to Ashworth, only about half of its potential membership (about 500) that it needed among county and school employees and City of Bishop workers.

(See CREDIT UNION, Page 6)

The NEWS-LETTER welcomes letters and comment relevant to public issues, and the editors will publish on the FORUM page those they consider to be timely. Due to space considerations, letters should not exceed 200 words. Viewpoints concisely stated are those most likely to be chosen for publication. Address your statement to NEWS-LETTER, PO Box 531, Independence 93526, or call 714 878-2582.



KETCHUM'S FAR-EAST VISIT: TAKING ISSUE WITH "B.K.'s NOTES"

"Dear Benett,

From where I sit, Bill Ketchum is not associated with 'Big Oil.'

'Big Oil' is Exxon, not Cullen. He has voted with the oil industry in Congress, but he has been voting with all oil, including a majority of independent oil people, not just 'Big Oil.'

As for his trip to the Mid-East, it is my understanding that he was asked to go over with the House Armed Services Committee, not to look into oil. I was told on good authority that he was representing the United States in Israel, Egypt, Iran and Africa, not the oil business.

It was not right to create the impression of Ketchum being tied in with 'Big Oil.'

I understand that the ASC met with Sadat before he made his decision to visit Israel. I'm not saying Ketchum or ASC had anything to do with that (Sadat's) decision, but if they met with him before he left, they didn't kill the deal, and may have helped it.

I just want to make it clear that it is unfair to associate Ketchum with 'Big Oil.' He wasn't representing 'Big Oil' in the Mid-East; he was representing America."

-Keith Bright, Independence

MAYOR'S APPOINTMENT

NO "PRIVATE MEETING" WITH BRADLEY, BUT
FOR INYO COUNTY A "SPECIAL LIAISON"

Mayor Tom Bradley, meeting with officials of Inyo County and the water and power department, has conceded at least one point to the beleaguered county; he appointed his deputy mayor as official liaison for Inyo County. The appointment was seen by Inyo administrators as a "first," and as a possible step toward resolution of some county-DWP conflicts.

Although they sought a "private" meeting with Bradley (and got instead a session including twenty-or-so), the mayor guaranteed the delegation there would be "no confrontations." And in fact DWP officials present sat silently through the luncheon held at L.A.'s Athletic Club. Bradley asked the Inyo people (County Administrator John Smith, the supervisors, and a deputy district attorney) to be "frank and open. They were.

Smith said he told Bradley that DWP's rate structure was "unfair" to Owens Valley, and - given the broad opportunity - touched all the bases involving lease policies, property sales, and outlined his hopes for a reasonable water and land management plan. In short, he "let it all hang out."

After the mayor tossed the appointment crust to the visitors, this in the person of Deputy Mayor Ray Remy, the county people decided to take a wait-and-see look - hoping the appointee "will work with us."

The SCHOOLS

A COLLEGE FOR INYO COUNTY:
A LEAN PURSE AND FAINT HOPE

With the passage of a state senate bill, Inyo's chances of forming a community college district appeared to recede further from any practical vision. That bill, which increases the counties' college attendance to 350-and-above before a district is required, added to the fact of the cost of such a district, has virtually precluded the establishment of a college - such as Ridgcrest's Cerro Coso - in this area.

Says a county school board spokesman, Jess McCollum: "The population would have to grow, and I don't see that it's going to open up. Things are limited by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power."

McCollum and others in the school board estimate that an educational system in the area could cost from two to three million dollars - this figure exclusive of operation and maintenance costs.

State law requires that counties form community college districts - or join other districts - if the number of college students in the area exceeds 350. Before the new law came into effect, the figure was 250, and this year Inyo college enrollments around the state are 243. McCollum said the county is fortunate to get the extension. "Otherwise," he said, "we're so small we would almost have to join another district," a situation in which college students would be restricted to attendance in Kern County or some adjoining district if they are to get county aid and free tuition. As it stands now, Inyo's college students go where they choose - and the county pays their tuition and a \$2-per-day allowance. Last year Inyo paid out about \$300,000 of county and state money to such students, a figure considered high but still far cheaper than the cost of a college.

The board members feel that many people in the county want a college district - but there are others who want the area population controlled to a figure not much larger than that now estimated - about 17,000, too few to support a college.

WITH NO RELIGION IN THE SCHOOLS,
MORE TIME-OFF HOURS FOR RELIGIOUS STUDY

Area educators are eyeing with some serious doubts a state bill that would extend from four to twenty the number of hours that schools must allow their students in time-off for "religious study."

Since the historic court case that ended "prayer in schools," legislators have been under increasing pressure to provide some way in which students might improve their spiritual lives along with their merely intellectual lives - and on school time. They opted for

(See SCHOOLS, Page 6)

LAND PURCHASE, Continued

Schlotman in a Los Angeles appellate court, the Los Angeles lawyer argued that DWP is exempt from government codes because Los Angeles is a charter city - and that Los Angeles is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act because it has no intent to change the use of the land. The court took the matter "under submission."

In view of DWP's stated policy of divesting itself of Inyo land, and the apparent contradiction of the land purchase, reporters contacted Jim Wickser, DWP chief engineer in the valley. Why, Wickser was asked, did DWP purchase the land? "When we don't buy property that we surround," he answered, "we can get hooked into

an assessment district, and typically, with the escalated cost of sewers, the assessment is more costly than the price of buying the land. It was economically in our favor to acquire that property."

Asked if he was aware of any planned developments if the land was bought by others, he said, "Look around. Every piece of property not bought by the department has been developed." He cited as an example the Mustang Mesa development near Bishop, and said an assessment district may be formed there, and that "they want DWP to pay half the cost even though our land is across the highway."

Bray said the only "developments" his clients have proposed amount to installation of a well and the planting of alfalfa fields.

The land purchase has raised other questions among some county taxpayers. A few landowners have complained that the price paid for the land has established a higher value on similar land, and that its value appraisal may have contributed to higher tax appraisals in the county. However, the landowners' claims were recently denied by a spokesman for the tax assessor's office.

Attorney Bray said he expects a court ruling in his case in "30 to 90 days."

CONSERVATION, Continued

Ittee of local residents never got beyond the organizational stage - and may not now be necessary. A spokesman for DWP, Assistant Engineer Lloyd Anderson, said, "That's a moot point now since the customers have so far been satisfied with the appeals process of the DWP administration. It's not clear if the valley appeals board will ever really function."

Some tourist-oriented business houses in the valley showed violations of the required 10 percent cutback; among these, service stations, restaurants, motels. But Anderson said, "We tried to re-adjust the allowable useage, and at the same time keep a realistic line for conservation. Water use fluctuates greatly in Inyo County due to the advent of thousands of tourists - sometimes more, sometimes fewer."

Anderson says there is no present idea as to how long the conservation program will last, or what pressures may eventually come to bear on Owens Valley water users. When the DWP follows through on its announced intent to establish water meters on valley residence lines (That could occur anytime after the first of the year), there may be reactions that could go in any direction. But for now at least, water conservation or water cost has been only a small problem for most valley people not on meters.

CREDIT UNION, Continued

"The possibility to increase was there," says Ashworth, "and why didn't it?...A few will work, but most couldn't care less." Ashworth also pointed out then that the county, and therefore its credit union, is "spread out from Shoshone to Mono County," a fact creating special problems in contact and communication.

Many county employees hoped to turn to the Caltrans credit union, but Ashworth said, "Caltrans doesn't want us. They've got all the loans they need." Kern County is another possible option, but Ashworth says the Kern organization would provide far less convenient service than might a local union.

"But, anyway," he added a little wistfully, "it wouldn't be the same."

For those employees who had planned to borrow Christmas money from the credit union (as had many in the past), their possibilities of getting some quick, low-interest cash seemed slight. There is a hurried turning to other sources, but these, they are finding, are less lenient than had been (perhaps unwisely) their own handy organization.

GRAND JURY, Continued

Meanwhile, District Attorney L.H. "Buck" Gibbons is examining possible impact of a new state law that would cut back grand jury power in criminal cases. Gibbons said cutting the jury's indictment power is "another trend toward more concern with the criminal instead of his victim." Gibbons said, too, that the proposal would restrict discretion of the district attorney.

SCHOOLS, Continued

"time-off hours" presently set at four each month, but, with pressure still on, they plan to extend the time to twenty.

Not at all necessary, say Inyo school officials. They don't use the time they have. Some in fact see the allowable hours as a way students can work a sort of legalized truancy.

At Bishop an assistant high school principal, Ken Tanksley, said the present four-hour allotment is rarely, if ever, used. He said that "a few" Jewish students are excused to observe certain holidays, but that no regular time off appears necessary for "religious instruction."

Owens Valley School Superintendent John Gilfillan said about 10 grade school students are released from school "early" on one day each week. They are part of a specific religious instruction program, but in an entire month only about an hour and a half of school time is covered. "It seems," said Gilfillan, "like a lot more time than we need."

Meanwhile, at Gilfillan's school, a study course in world religions was offered last year. "We didn't have a big demand for the class, but those who attended, liked it." The instruction procedure carefully avoided what might be seen as "religious instruction" or even religious direction and remained within the bounds of philosophical and historical study. Having no qualified teacher, the school abandoned the class this year.

A VISITOR FROM SACRAMENTO

CALIFORNIA'S SECRETARY OF STATE FLIES TO BISHOP AND TALKS ABOUT VOTER REGISTRATION, A MUSEUM PROPOSAL - AND POLITICS - AND CHARMS THE COUNTY'S VIP'S

The petite Oriental lady who serves as California's secretary of state (the one with the name a lot of people are still having trouble with - March Fong Eu) flew into Inyo County to push some pet programs of her's that probably will need statewide support. Among these:

VOTER REGISTRATION REORGANIZATION, which according to Eu is getting more registered voters, but isn't getting more voters to the polls to vote;

A STATE MUSEUM, one that the secretary is proposing and will put into bill form next year to present to the legislature; and expectedly,

POLITICS - ("I will probably be running for re-election.")

The touring official, accompanied by her retinue - Assistant Secretary of State (Michael Gagan), her press secretary (Caren Daniels), and a state policeman (Art Royal), flew into Bishop airport in a chartered plane. At Embers Restaurant she met nearly a hundred of the county's business and political VIP's who gathered there for dinner and to hear her talk. The visit to Bishop was one of several such stops she is making in the state in order to fulfill a promise to visit with election officials "on their own territory." Her office is largely responsible for conduct of elections in the state. The top election official in Inyo County is County Clerk Rita Bromley who spearheaded arrangements for the visit.

Secretary Eu said she was not necessarily "politicking," although it became clear Eu will again seek election to her office - a job many believe to be a "showcase" spot that provides

a good launching pad for political hopefuls looking for higher office. Asked if she has her eye on Washington, Eu replied that she "doesn't think that far ahead."

In the matter of voter registration reforms, Eu said she thinks the President's "election day registration" plan appears now to be dead, but that the idea had popular appeal.

The plan was opposed by many election officials who feel that it creates too many administrative problems. Eu agrees with their feelings, but thinks problems "could be worked out."

With diplomacy (and a certain truthful accuracy), the secretary of state said Inyo County is one county where the voters turn out in exemplary numbers, which she attributes in large part to the efforts of "hard-working" Clerk Bromley.

As for the "post card" registration program inaugurated a year ago, it "seems to be working better than it did when we first started,"

said Eu.

And during the Bishop festivities, another issue predictably arose from the conversation at the Embers: the Inyo-DWP water battle. Eu was asked what she thought about the water troubles, and her audience was surprised to learn it had not made its way to her desk. Said Eu in explanation: "I never heard of it."

"Constitutional officers get rather insulated. They usually just stay in Sacramento, San Francisco, or Los Angeles." If her hearers felt any disappointment or surprise to that answer, they were keeping silent about it. More than one commented on "her charm," and few, if any, pressed on her their local problems.



MARCH FONG EU AND RITA BROMLEY
"...not necessarily politicking."

EMPLOYEES, Continued

her. But she also added that the job "can cost a lot." The county, as she pointed out, is not always eager to reward with raises or job advancement those persons who oppose the administration and its policies when need be in the employees' interest. The personal job ambitions of the county employee must often be suppressed if the employees are to be effectively represented without compromise.

(In her job as secretary to the planning commission, Scruggs last year had asked for advancement and salary increase; the administration responded by offering her a "management" position that would compromise her as a negotiator for the employees. She was refused the salary increase on any other terms; she turned it down.)

The employees association has postponed any action on any proposal until another general meeting is held near the end of the month. None will speculate on which way the employees are likely to move.

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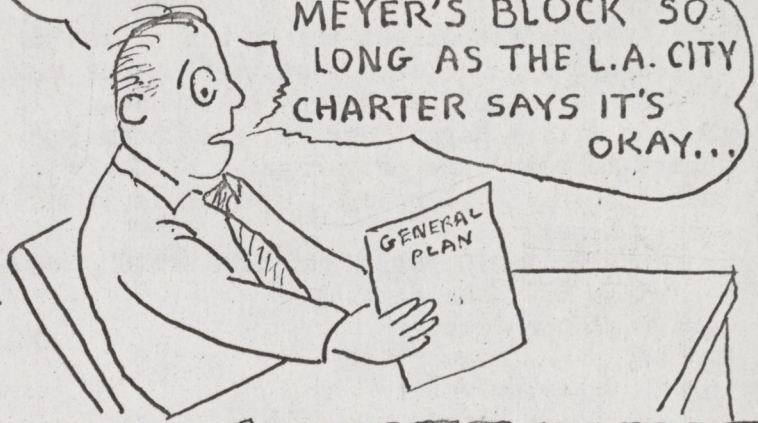
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INTERPRETING THE (VERY) GENERAL PLAN

LET'S SEE NOW... IF I'M READING THIS RIGHT, I CAN BUILD UP TO 426 TRAILER SPACES NEXT DOOR TO PAT WILTSIE, AND SUBDIVIDE THE LONE PINE DUMP AND PAHRUMP VALLEY...



... DRILL UP TO 12 WATER WELLS IN AUSTIN'S STORE PARKING LOT, AND OPEN A STRIP-MINE ON GLENN MEYER'S BLOCK SO LONG AS THE L.A. CITY CHARTER SAYS IT'S OKAY...



... AND IF HERB AND WILMA AND JOHNNY APPROVE, I CAN PAVE OVER BISHOP CITY PARK WITH 3½ INCHES OF COTTON CANDY ..OR ASPHALT...



...OR GET DEAN TO BUILD ME A HOUSE OR RENDERING PLANT NEXT TO DOUG OR ROGER.

I THINK I'LL MOVE TO WINNEMUCCA



J. HESTON '77

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